

Aviation Advisory Committee
May 18, 2011
Milton, Florida

The Aviation Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Carlos Diaz ((Fixed Base Operator) (FBO)) and members, Theodore Elbert (District 1), Mike Harris (District 2), Clay McCutchan (District 4), Chip Mapoles (District 5), Randy Roy (NAS Whiting Field), and Egas M. Gomes, EJ (Eglin Air Force Base). County staff present: County Administrator (Hunter Walker), County Engineer (Roger Blaylock), and Administrative Services Manager (Tammy Simmons).

Chairman Diaz called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The minutes of the April 20, 2011, meeting was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Plan Update

Greg Kesler, Deputy Project Manager, 46th Test Wing (Science Applications International Corporation - SAIC) Plans Office at Eglin, contractor hired to support the GRASI Initiative, presented an update on the GRASI program – Ex 1.

GRASI has moved from the planning phase to the implementation phase. The Strategic Plan, final document, has been accomplished and a copy has been distributed and is available to interested individuals – Ex 2. The key strategies are the results of the modeling and the Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) meetings. There are eleven (11) strategies:

1. Air Traffic Control Procedures – Implement six prioritized strategies in combinations with each other as a toolbox for Air Traffic Control (ATC) to use in minimizing or managing congestion. Rely on ATC judgment to determine on a case-by-case basis whether some measures are appropriate, such as the east-west routing or the use of shoreline airspace for ascent and descent.

A. Redistribute/Relocate Simulated Flame-out maneuvers (SFOs): This strategy is to shift or redistribute some of the SFOs to lessen the impact on the north-south corridor to minimize impact to civilian traffic from SFO operations. SFOs are a practice maneuver of an emergency where an aircraft, simulating a loss of engine power, descends from 10,000 feet and practices landing. As part of the F-35 Lightning II (Joint Strike Fighter) syllabus, pilots are expected to perform SFOs, and as a training base, modeling revealed that during the peak times, there is going to be a lot of congestion in the North-South Corridor between the two restricted air spaces R-2914 and R-2915. The major command over the F-35 squadron and 33rd Fighter Wing has done some preliminary reviews on this. There may be some environmental impacts that go along with this strategy; communities may have to update their Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Plan (AICUZ) to reflect the additional noise.

B. Efficient Use of Restricted Airspace (RA): This strategy was developed to more efficiently use the two restricted air spaces and does not have an impact on civil traffic.

C. Subdivision of R-2919A: This strategy is to modify that little piece of RA that sets over Choctawhatchee Bay, north of Destin making it easier to get civil traffic into and out of Destin. Now when that airspace is active, non-participating aircraft have to stay three (3) nautical miles away, it gets very tight for the controllers and they do not have a lot of flexibility. We are looking to create an internal profile that would create a shelf of about 3000 feet and below to allow the controllers to bring aircraft in more efficiently.

D. Establish Standard Instrument Departures/Standard Terminal Arrival Routes (SIDs/STARs): Part of the efforts was that Georgia Tech worked with the controllers to create more efficient SIDs/STARs. The controllers are working with higher headquarters and the people responsible for developing these criteria to actually get these published and expect publication will be in the 2013-2014 timeframe.

E. Shoreline Airspace for Ascent and Descent: This strategy was looked at for modeling purposes because only six (6) aircraft can be in the North-South Corridor to operate safely; if there are more or any in cue waiting to take off, the shoreline airspace can be utilized. This option will be used sparingly because not all aircraft are capable of climbing above 10,000 feet.

F. East/West Route from Destin Airport and Eglin Air Force Base (AFB): This strategy will give the pilots the option of going East-West and around the RA if the North-South Corridor is congested. During modeling, additional flight time and cost were reviewed from an aviation perspective. This strategy would be used sparingly; it would give the pilot the option of waiting on the ground until the corridor is open or taking off and going East-West.

2. Review Operations at Eglin AFB: Headquarters Air Force and Northwest Florida Regional Airport should review current and planned operations. This strategy came late in the GRASI process because after the modeling effort took place Vision Airlines started operating as a hub out of Northwest Florida Regional Airport creating a daily increase of about 16 operations. Pentagon wants this review to make sure there are no potential impacts to training. This could be a political issue.

3. Reorganize Pensacola Military Operations Areas (MOAs): Proceed with evaluation of the Pensacola North MOA reorganization. The Navy came up with this strategy to reorganize the North-South MOAs to get better use for the Texan II (T-6) training. The North-South MOA has to be reorganized to get more student pilots in to increase the efficiency and productivity of the airspace.

4. Training in Regional Special Use Airspace (SUAs): Establish or modify arrangements and enhance coordination between scheduling entities as needed to enable use of surrounding SUAs within the GRASI region when they are available. Modeling showed a need to utilize airspace not owned, scheduled, or controlled by the military, as it is currently underutilized.

5. Partner to Use New Areas: Actively pursue new partnership opportunities for landscape-scale training. This strategy looks at landscape opportunities to train beyond the Northwest Florida Region. An example would be the utilization of the Apalachicola

National Forest by Special Operations for Emerald Warriors' exercises last year; however, it is not used on a regular basis, it is an opportunity where we can lease, buy or use land for ground troops and have airspace over to support the troops on the ground. Whiting and AFSOC are currently doing this with some of their air fields; they are partnering or leasing land from land owners to do helicopter landing zones.

6. Establish New Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs): Proceed with the creation of Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs) as described. This strategy is the creation of air traffic control assigned airspaces, which are above flight level 180. The four (4) airspaces are all at the same altitude. These airspaces, if they are available and traffic conditions permit, can be scheduled independently or in entirety. This is a good opportunity for F-35s and F-22s. If it was scheduled and activated, it would be controlled by Eglin controllers, the FAA would turn the airspace over to them and mission control would control the aircraft within that airspace.

7. Six-Day Training: Explore whether the costs and benefits associated with extending operating hours to six days a week warrant implementation of this strategy to expand test and training opportunities. The Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) came up with the strategy to expand a five (5) day flying window to a six (6) day flying window to accomplish mission. Air Armament Center Plans and Programs is going to identify what the cost would be for doing a six (6) day work week. The challenges associated with the extended flying day would be cost due to increased maintenance and state operating support, the perception of loss of recreational areas (hunters, hikers, canoers, bike riders, etc.), and the loss of a day on a weekend for recreation because of operational missions or training missions. Whiting Field already does a six (6) day flying week so we can use them as a model for what the cost would be; they are open two weekends a month, occasionally one weekend a month to catch up.

8. Education and Outreach: Develop or intensify outreach efforts to broaden awareness of the presence of intensive student pilot training. This strategy is an outreach and education awareness strategy to general aviation and commercial aviation in regards to the high volume of pilot training. The Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) decided to focus on public education and outreach through media such as the following websites: AOPA training and safety website, www.aopa.org/training/; DoD See and Avoid Website, www.seeandavoid.org/; and FAA Special Use Airspace Website, <http://sua.faa.gov/sua/>.

9. Collocated Control Facilities: Explore the costs and potential efficiencies of creating a regional control facility (collocation of air traffic functions and consolidation of mission airspace control). Also explore whether repurposing existing structures or creating a "virtual" Regional Control Facility (RACFAC) has the potential to provide similar benefits at reduced costs. This strategy explores building a regional control facility to put schedulers and mission controllers together so that the scheduling function and the mission control function are in the same room for greater efficiency and safety. The FAA has done a lot of regional radar facility consolidation which reduced maintenance of total number of facilities, it requires less equipment, and less personnel.

10. Coordinated Scheduling: Develop procedures or systems to enhance the coordination and visibility of scheduling.

11. Continued Leadership: The ESC should reconvene semiannually, or as needed, to monitor implementation and provide additional guidance as needed. The ESC should also consider the establishment of limited-focus working groups to pursue implementation and achieve GRASI goals.

Selection of Chairman/Vice-Chairman

Harris moved motion to elect a new chairman when members for all districts are placed on the committee, motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

Roy introduced Mr. Egas M. Gomes (EJ) to the committee as the Eglin Air Force Base representative as an ex-officio to the committee.

Roy stated they are continuing to fly on Saturdays on occasion and could send something to staff stating when they are flying to distribute to the committee.

Diaz stated AMS is having their fly-in this Saturday at Peter Prince Airport.

Elbert announced his resignation and provide a letter of resignation to Walker - letter in file.

FBO Issues

Dave Glass reported the last couple of days the rotating beacon has been going on 24 hours a day, been lit and turning, Ingram was out today and replaced the photo cell so it should shut off during the day and work during the night like it is suppose to. He further reported AMS now has another courtesy car, a 7 passenger van.

Archie Collum stated the site for MAP is being cleared, they have let some contracts this week, they will have their facility ordered this week and it will be shipped soon, and that they are working with all the county departments to conform to their requirements.

Chairman Issues

Diaz stated the company that did the run-up pads left a lot of trash by the electrical building.

Blaylock stated the vendor is responsible for the pick-up of the site and he will notify them tomorrow.

Diaz requested the fence line that runs along North Airport Road be cleaned by the county.

Simmons stated she will request the fence line to be cleaned by the county.

Pensacola Flight Watch

No items.

Administrative/Engineer

Walker stated the county has concluded the lease with Milton Aviation Partners (MAP). They have cleared the site and are now working through the permitting issues on the building.

Walker stated in 2003 the original Resolution that established the Aviation Advisory Committee was amended to include a FBO representative, with no anticipation of an additional FBO in the future. Now that we have two (2) FBO's under lease, Walker stated he feels it is dysfunctional to have two (2) FBO's sitting on this committee. Walker's recommendation to the Board of Commissioners is to remove the FBO representative from the resolution and go back to the original five (5) members plus the military representative. Walker stated FBO issues will remain on the agenda for reports from both FBO's.

McCutchan moved motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to drop the FBO representative from the Aviation Advisory Committee, motion seconded, motion approved unanimously.

Other Business

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on July 20, 2011.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.